

HFMA - The Voice of the Natural Health Industry. For information on HFMA membership, or enquiries, call 0208 481 7100 or email [office@hfma.co.uk](mailto:office@hfma.co.uk)



# Bulletin Board

— News, information and comment



## Let's work to protect supplements choice

The Food Supplement Directive came into force years ago and has been implemented in stages. In the UK, we have to abide by European as well as national legislation and there is pressure from some member states to have a harmonised position. This would mean all member states would have the same requirements for key vitamins and nutrients in their diet which then has an effect on food supplements and the maximum levels we would be allowed to provide. However, each country has different nutritional needs because of its location and local diet and lifestyle. The European politicians' 'one size fits all' idea doesn't work when it comes to the health of people from 27 countries. The fact that food supplements have an excellent safety record should be taken into consideration when assessing maximum levels.

In the UK we have a history of using vitamins and food supplements to boost health and wellness, but this is under threat as member states do not see as strong a need for this. If the majority of member states support a low maximum level then we could lose a big percentage of our products. Many manufacturers and retailers would lose jobs, and most importantly the British public would not be able to



**Lynn Lord,**  
Managing Director,  
Natures Aid  
and Vice Chair HFMA

legally buy their chosen supplements. Most people in the health food trade would agree that the safe level is significantly higher than the RDA and the wide choice of supplements currently available should remain. Imagine if no one could buy a Vitamin C tablet of more than 160mg. Most people would need to take several tablets per day if they wanted to continue taking them at a level they find effective to maintain their health and possibly prevent colds, flu and viruses. At a time when the government is trying to cut public spending, surely they should allow people to try to stay well.

As a result of this threat Sue Croft, director of CHC (Consumers For Health Choice) is re-energising the 'Save our Supplements' campaign to focus on protecting freedom of choice. Hopefully they will engage with the issues, and by using Facebook and Twitter, attract a new generation who want to maintain a wide choice of supplements. I'm sure Sue would appreciate any assistance or support: more information can be found at [www.saveoursupplements.org.uk](http://www.saveoursupplements.org.uk).

It's easy to sit back and let people like Sue do the work, but unless she has support it won't happen. In the meantime the HFMA continues to lobby ministers to ensure the British public can continue to buy their supplements, and we will do all we can to protect our members' interests. For further details contact [graham@hfma.co.uk](mailto:graham@hfma.co.uk).

### THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Excellent history of safety should be considered when assessing maximum levels
- It could be potentially disastrous if member states support a low maximum level
- 'Save our Supplements' campaign helps educate consumers on the issue

### GETTING THE BEST FROM THE HFMA...

#### EU partnerships

As well as providing members with essential insights into the UK VMS market, the HFMA is a member of both The European Federation of Associations of Health Product Manufacturers (EHPM), and The International Alliance of Dietary/Food Supplement Associations (IADSA). Maintaining successful partnerships with influential industry organisations such as the EHPM and the IADSA can help the HFMA and its members to gain crucial insights and knowledge of industry developments from a unique EU perspective. Industry collaborations such as this also help responsible companies work towards their shared goals of ensuring the development of an appropriate and balanced regulatory framework for the Natural Health industry.

### NEWS...

#### Post NHCR clarification

Following the implementation of the new health claims regulation and its 14 December transition deadline, there has never been a more important time to ensure all packaging, labelling and marketing materials conform to new requirements. With many grey areas remaining within this legislation, the HFMA's Labelling, Advertising and Promotion Advice Division (LAPAD) offers guidelines and help notes compiled by LAPAD and the advisers of the HFMA as an aid to understanding the requirements of relevant legislation. LAPAD can also help to demystify any remaining questions you might have.

### HFMA SPOTLIGHT

#### What do you most enjoy about your job?

As technical director for an expanding small business, and dealing with projects spanning a number of different industry sectors, I enjoy the varied mix of technical, regulatory and quality challenges that are associated with each new product development. However, I get most satisfaction from seeing products which we have successfully formulated in shopping baskets at the retail checkout.

#### What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Keeping up to date with changing legislation and defining the different



**Alan Gibson,**  
Technical Director  
Biofilm Ltd

regulatory requirements for products which are for sale inside and outside the EU is one of the most challenging aspects of my job. Developing products and processes that conform to regulatory requirements is essential for our licence to operate.

#### Where do you see your business in 10 years' time?

Thin film technology offers benefits over traditional oral dosage formats and I see our business further expanding into the medicinal herbal and pharmaceutical sectors, competing on a level playing field with established players in the US.

#### What's the best piece of business advice you've ever been given?

"If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail", there are so many interdependent elements in developing and commercialising products that thorough project planning is essential.

#### What do you find most useful about

#### being a member of the HFMA?

The ability to get quick definitive answers to regulatory queries from industry experts.

#### If you could change one thing in the world what would it be?

Universal access to modern health-care and drugs. Although, a summer in Glasgow without rain also came to mind!

#### Who is your biggest inspiration and why?

Richard Branson for his entrepreneurial business and personal exploits, and stressing the importance of having fun at work.